245 439 when bananas surpassed it. In 1969, copra regained its position as the leading export. At present, the bulk of Tongan copra is shipped to continental Europe; some shipments have gone to Japan, Colombia, and Venezuela (Tonga Copra Board records).

In addition to copra, there are a number of other coconut products which are exported commercially: desiccated [258] coconut, coir products, and whole nuts. Production of desiccated coconut (sliced and quick-dried) for overseas shipment commenced in 1963 at Haveluloto, just outside Nuku'alofa. As of 1971, all coconuts used in its production were obtained from Tongatapu growers who sold them to the Copra Board at permanent buying stations throughout Tongatapu. Desiccated coconut is a source of increasing income to Tonga and its farmers (Table 25). It is generally exported to New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, or Fiji. In 1965, the Copra Board began exporting whole coconuts to Australia and New Zealand. The quantity is small, however, compared to that used for desiccated coconut.

● 288 655 In 1963, the Copra Board started a coir fiber industry to utilize the leftover husks from the production of desiccated coconut. The major products were rope, twine, door mats, floor runners, and various types of brushes. [439] Unfortunately, exports proved unprofitable and the Board has continued only limited production for local consumption.